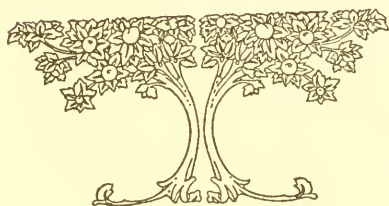


Bare-foot Days
And Other Poems
G. Madison Maxwell



BARE-FOOT DAYS

AND OTHER POEMS



G. MADISON MAXWELL

One Thousand Nine Hundred and Fourteen

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no.

IN presenting this little volume to the public, the author does not claim any literary merit for the poems, but simply presents them as his random thoughts in verse, and hopes that those who read them will derive some pleasure therefrom.

THE AUTHOR.

TO
ALL THE MARYS IN GENERAL
BUT TO THE ONE MARY IN PARTICULAR
WHO WAS BRAVE ENOUGH TO CHANGE HER NAME
TO THAT OF THE AUTHOR, THESE
VERSES ARE AFFECTIONATELY
DEDICATED

BARE-FOOT DAYS

AND OTHER POEMS

BARE-FOOT DAYS

As I sit to-night I'm thinking of the days that used to be,
Memory unto memory linking as it all comes back to me;
How my thoughts to-night are rooted to the time of boyhood days
When we always went barefooted and were fond of boyhood's
ways.

I remember well the front yard where the ball ground used to be,
Where we played at fox and goose between the elm and cherry
tree.

I remember, too, the meadows where with Heck we chased the
hare,

And the woods all wrapt in shadows which to enter we'd not dare.
I remember well the cow-house where on rainy days we played,
Where we chased the rat and dormouse which behind the boxes
stayed.

Then, on bright days to the woodlands we would lengthy rambles
take,

Where we played that we were Indians and would burn our foes
at stake;

There with feathers in our headgear and our hatchets in our
belts,

We would organize in parties and would hunt each other's pelts.
Then with fishing hook and tackle to the creek we would repair,
Where we mostly caught the minnow, though 't was said that eels
were there.

Then, when all besmirched and muddy, from the sole of foot to
crown,

But with faces bright and ruddy we would hurry back to town.

How we'd gobble down the hot rolls with the butter melted in,

And devour the little fishes, caring naught for bone or fin.

Then, when evening's work was over and we all had gathered in,

How we loved to sit by Mother as she'd mend our clothes, and
spin

Barefoot Days; and Other Poems

Yarns to us of old Br'er Rabbit and the many things he'd do;
Or of Joseph's colored habit and of Daniel brave and true.
Then, when little eyes were heavy and the evening prayer was
 said,
We'd repair for dreamless slumber to our little trundle bed.
Those were happy days and joyous, gone to come again no more,
With no troubles to annoy us, but true happiness galore.
So to-night my thoughts are rooted to the time of childhood days
When we always went barefooted and were fond of boyhood's
 ways.

THE LAND OF MAKE-BELIEVE

Have you ever gone a roamin' to the Land of Make-believe,
Sat a while beneath its cloisters at the cooling of the eve,
Drunk your fill out of the fountain springing from the charmed
earth,
Seen the little childish faces, full of laughter, romp, and mirth?

'T is a funny little kingdom, or republic, if you please,
As the king who rules the people there is never at his ease;
To-day he holds a scepter and to-morrow he's a clown,
And to-day he lives in mansions that to-morrow are torn down.

'T is a wild and woolly kingdom, full of lions, apes, and bears,
Tho' the sofa is the lion and the apes are rocking chairs;
But the terror on their faces and the way they cry and squeal,
Makes you know the little people think the awful things are real.

'T is a busy little hamlet, full of thrift and steady work,
And the little men and women never will a duty shirk,
Though the hobby is a plough horse and the poker is a plough,
And although the floor is polished, they will break it up somehow.

There the flower pot's a washtub, and no matter if it leaks,
Leaving little streams of soap suds all about the floor in streaks;
Mother's dressing sack is dirty and the dirt just won't come out,
And the little washer-woman keeps on rubbing it about.

There a bottle is a little babe with a nipple for a cap,
And the little mother sits and holds it gently on her lap,
Pats it softly on the shoulder, as she hugs it to her breast,
And e'er so softly humming sings the little babe to rest.

'T is a quiet little kingdom, when the evening shadows creep,
For the little washer-woman and the nurse are both asleep;
The little ploughman rests his head upon the lion's mane,
And there's perfect rest and quiet in this kingdom of the brain.

Barefoot Days; and Other Poems

Come and go with me this evening to the Land of Make-believe,
Put away your cares and troubles and Old Grouch behind
you leave,

Make believe your work is pleasure, and your wife a real queen,
Make believe you're rich as Croesus and are what you might have
been.

Just one evening in this country will refresh you, oh, so much,
You'll be livened up and brightened by the little peoples' touch;
So, whene'er in life's great battle all your fondest hopes deceive,
Drop it all, and go a roamin' to the Land of Make-believe.

WHEN I GO HOME

When I go home, Oh! will it not be joy
To tread the ways I trod when but a boy,
And see the old, old places in the town,
With ivy growing 'round and fences down?

When I go home, Oh! will it not be sweet
To walk at leisure down the crooked street
That winds all in and out among the trees,
Where lazy cattle browse, so much at ease?

When I go home, Oh! with what joy to greet
The old familiar faces on the street,
To feel the old hand-shake and word of cheer
Of those old boyhood friends to me so dear!

When I go home, Oh! will it not be bliss
To feel my mother's warm and welcome kiss,
To sit down in the old split-bottom chair,
And have a chat with all the loved ones there?

When I go home, but Ah! the fairy's flown,
Though to have held her I'd give all I own.
My fancy's dreams are foolish, every one,
With crooked streets, and friends, and mother, gone.

THE CALL OF THE WILD

Do you ever feel within
That you really are akin
To the bees and birds and squirrels in the wood?
Feel the call to wander out
To the woods and roam about,
Come too strong to be resisted if you would?

Do you ever seem to hear
Voices whisper in your ear
That the fish are waiting for you in the brook?
And it's all that you can do,
If to nature you are true,
To let rest another day your line and hook?

Does it ever seem to you
That the world is very blue,
And that life is not worth living, after all?
And you'd give it all away
For the pleasure of one day
Just to list to nature's voice and hear her call?

If you've had such thoughts as these
Whispered to you by the breeze,
And with them your lonely hours you have beguiled,
Don't get worried, thinking you
Have a brain not working true,
For 't is nothing but the calling of the wild.

'T is the faint but sweet echo
Of the days of long ago
When your spirit, in another form than this,
Wandered 'round upon the earth,
Full of happiness and mirth,
In a realm of perfect happiness and bliss;

E'er that sin had come with toil,
Joy and happiness to spoil,
And e'er the devil on the earth had trod;
When man lived the simple life
With no jealousy and strife,
And communed with nature and with nature's God.

THE BLESSED GIFT

Rest? Is it rest you seek, dear heart of mine;
As daily toil and care make you to pine
For easier things, and freedom from the care
And trouble that surround you everywhere?

Rest? Is it rest your tired body needs,
As on the weary road you toil, that leads
To nothing but more toil as you plod on
Until your feeble strength is almost gone?

Rest? Is it rest from daily care you crave;
Rest, that your tired, wasted form will save
From little cares and frets of daily life,
And save you from life's noisy, bloody strife?

Rest? Is it rest you seek? Rest from the load
Which rests so heavy on you; from the goad
That spurs you on to greater toil and speed,
Is rest from these the one good gift you need?

Ah! 'Tis not rest you need, dear tired soul,
But strength, to help along toward the goal
Some feebler soul than thou, who needs a lift,
And helping him you find the blessed gift.

Barefoot Days; and Other Poems

NATURE'S BALM

Are you tired or feeling lazy?
Does your work most run you crazy?
Do you have a kind of longing for the outdoor life and sports?
Do your thoughts go wandering ever
To the woods and to the river,
And you try to do your work but can't because you're out of sorts?

Does your mind at times go wandering,
As alone you're sitting, pondering
O'er the many heavy trials that beset you in this life;
And you wish that you had never
Left your home up on the river,
And come down into the city with its many ills and strife?

Do you sit for hours blinking
At your work, and idly thinking
Of the dear old childhood days, when all alone with line and hook
You'd go gladly out a fishing,
And would sit for hours, wishing
That an eel would come along and get the baits the crayfish took?

Just quit work and wander out,
All alone, and walk about,
Catch a glimpse of nature in the garb she dons in early spring.
Keep your mind prepared to feel
All that nature may reveal,
So, you're sure to catch the lesson that to you she wants to bring.

She will meet you there in quiet,
And will feed your soul on diet
That is richer than the richest food to mortals ever given;
She will soothe your troubled spirit
With a draught of living spirit
More refreshing than the water from the rock by Moses riven.

You'll forget your care and sorrow,
And feel better on the morrow,
When again you take upon yourself the humdrum work of life;
You'll feel bright instead of lazy,
And your work be made more easy,
By the time you've spent with nature, far away from noise and
strife.

JUST BEFORE CHRISTMAS

"Old Santa Claus is comin' here
 'Fore long," my mama said,
An' gave us all a hug an' kiss
 An' tucked us in the bed.
She says his back is breakin' with
 The weight of sweets an' toys
He every Christmas carries to
 The little girls an' boys
Who always mind their mamas well,
 An' try hard to be good,
An' help their mamas make the fires,
 An' carry in the wood;
But, mama says, he never comes
 To see the boys that's bad;
Because when we are naughty boys
 Old Santa Claus gets mad;
An' when he sees our stockings hang,
 His mouth he kinder twitches
To one side, an' says, "No sir ree!"
 Then fills 'em full of switches.
So I am goner be real good
 An' do what mama says,
An' keep my eye on little Sis
 As she crawls 'round and plays;
I'll carry in the stove wood, too,
 An' rock Sis when she cries,
An' carry Grandma kindling wood,
 An' brush away the flies
That always bother Grandma so
 Whene'er she goes to sup
Her tea, an' then old Santa Claus
 Will fill my stocking up
With every kind of sweets an' toys
 An' things you've ever seen;
Because my mama'll tell him what
 A good, good boy I've been.
But after Christmas, I'll jes tell
 Mama that I was bluffin'
Old Santa Claus, an' foolin' her,
 An' then I won't do nothin'.

CHRISTMAS DOUBTS

If Santa Claus was what they say he is,
Was on his job, and 'tended to his bis',
There'd be no use of merchants buying toys
An' dolls an' sleds for little girls and boys.

You can't fool me or make me really think
That any man who lives on food and drink
Can squeeze himself into a chimney flue
And bring a lot of sleds and trinkets, too.

If I could somehow plan to keep awake,
I'd sure find out if Santa was a fake,
I'd sit all night and watch the chimney flue,
And catch the sly old elf if he came through.

But sure as Christmas comes my eyes are lead,
And 'fore it's hardly dark I'm off to bed,
And Christmas morn when I get out of bed
All hangin' there's my ball and toys and sled.

And how's a fellow ever goner know?
So I say, after all, just "let her go,"
As long as I get sleds and toys enough
I'll let Old Santa work his cunning bluff.

MOTHERHOOD

A man may boast of mighty deeds
 From dawn to setting sun,
And dream of war and prancing steeds,
 And battles nobly won,
While woman, walking by his side,
 Boasts naught of worldly good,
But wears upon her head with pride
 The crown of motherhood.

Oh, diadem! Oh, crown of crowns!
 Oh, mingled joys and pains,
What peace is thine, what wealth one owns,
 Who such an honor gains.
Can worldly wealth or social stand,
 Or any earthly good,
Such joy and peace and love command
 As simple motherhood?

Ah, no, 't is not in pomp and war,
 Or mart or busy street,
Nor in the pulpit, at the bar,
 The greatest joys we meet;
But simply toiling in the home,
 Tho' oft misunderstood,
'T is there the sweetest joy will come—
 The joy of motherhood.

TO A FLY ON MY WINDOW PANE

What makes you crawl, you little thing,
Straight up the window pane,
Then circle round a tiny ring,
And then crawl down again?

What brought you from your winter's bed,
Where snug and warm you've lain,
And makes you fret and bruise your head
Against my window pane?

How know you 't is not cold outside
As 't was a month ago?
How know you but there may betide
You wintry winds or snow?

You best had wait a while and see
That spring has come, indeed;
Or else by cold benumbed you'll be
And birds on you will feed.

But no, you fuss and fume the more,
And buzz and rear and pout,
And lest you make yourself quite sore,
I guess I'll let you out.

You're gone; as straight as arrow's flight
You've pierced the balmy air,
Until you've passed quite out of sight,
And still go buzzing there.

Had I the faith that you've displayed
The call of God to hear,
Had I your courage, undismayed
To do and never fear;

I'd triumph over every ill,
And overcome each care,
Peace would my troubled bosom fill
And reign serenely there.

THE BOOK OF LIFE

Such a wonderful book is the Book of Life,
As we study it day after day;
On its pages are written the annals of years,
Now radiant with joy, now soiled with tears,
As it tells of our hopes and our sorrows and fears,
From our birth till our temples are gray.

There's a chapter that tells us of our babyhood,
And the mother who cared for us then;
How she worked for us always and gave us our food,
And would tell us great tales not as yet understood,
Of how goblins would get us unless we were good,
Ere that we became women and men.

There's a chapter that tells of our romping school days,
And our comrades who played with us there;
Of the boys who were older and rough in their plays,
Of the fishing and hunting and gay holidays,
Of our sweethearts so truthful and faithful always,
With their curls and their soft wavy hair.

There's a chapter comes next full of sorrow and gloom,
And is not bright and gay as the rest;
They are talking in whispers out in the next room,
And are walking on tiptoe as softly they come,
For a mother is taken in midst of life's bloom,
And with sobbing and tears laid to rest.

There's a chapter that tells of the gay college life,
When we left the old home for a while;
When with mischief and frolicsome fun we were rife,
When our life was a mixture of school books and strife,
With professors and fresh and the President's wife,
Lonely hours with such pranks we'd beguile.

Barefoot Days; and Other Poems

There's a chapter comes next full of grandeur and bliss,
And it reads to us now like a dream;
We are strolling alone with a sweet little miss,
Some soft words are spoken and sealed with a kiss,
And we're sure that no others e'er loved like this,
And our troubles as trifles now seem.

Then the story runs on into busy mid-life,
When the cares of the home weight us down;
When our features are marred by the combat and strife,
For the sake of the home and the child and the wife,
And we think what monotonous drudge is our life,
And our foreheads are furrowed with frown.

There's a chapter that tells of the dear little boy
Who was loaned to us just for a while;
And our hearts were so merry and bursting with joy,
And for his sole amusement our time we'd employ,
But he's gone to where troubles and cares ne'er annoy,
And we've nothing left now but his smile.

But the years hasten on as a tale that is told,
And the gray hairs appear on the brow;
The proud shoulders so straight and so manly of old,
Have been drooped by the work in the heat and the cold,
And with arms weak but loving our dear ones we hold,
For we're slipping away from them now.

The old grandfather sits by grandma as she knits,
And they dream of the days past and gone;
They are living again the old days as they sit,
And their memories from present to olden scenes flit,
As they place them together now little by bit,
And forget that they're living alone.

Then the last chapter tells of grim Death at the door,
And he claims the frail forms as his own;
But the spirits immortal soar on to the shore
Where the trials and cares ne'er molest any more,
And the loved ones are waiting who've gone on before,
There to place on our foreheads the crown.

Barefoot Days; and Other Poems

A WORD TO THE WISE

A lassie fair
With golden hair,
Sat on a rustic seat;
The river bright
With pale moonlight
Rolled just beneath her feet.

Then came a lad
Who from his dad
Had managed to escape,
And asked this girl
With golden curl
If he might share her cape.

"O yes," she said,
All blushing red,
For she was out for fun,
The boy was, too,
So objects two
Soon changed to object one.

The father old
That night grew cold,
And waked up from his dream,
He thought he would,
To warm his blood,
Walk down and see the stream.

With eyes a-glare
And straightened hair,
He then approached the seat,
Where lad and lass,
In fond embrace,
Enjoyed communion sweet.

Barefoot Days; and Other Poems

As to the end
Of this, my friend,
I know you have surmised;
Suffice to say
That to this day
The lesson they have prized.

Now all you girls
With golden curls,
And girls with auburn hair,
Remember well
This tale I tell,
And never, never dare

To let a lad
Who from his dad
By stealth at night escapes,
Persuade you girls
With flowing curls
To let him share your capes.

SHADOW GOBLINS

Ain't it snug an' warm an' restful
 When you're snugly tucked in bed,
An' the cover's pulled up over,
 ('Cept there ain't none on your head),
An' you feel so safe an' good-like
 'Cause your prayers have done been said?

But you don't want Ma to leave you;
 (Not because you're scared at all),
'Cause you see the big dark shadows
 Dancin' ghost-like on the wall,
An' they look so much like goblins
 That they make your feelin's crawl.

'Course you know there ain't no goblins;
 'Cause your ma she tells you so,
As she smoothes down nice the cover
 An' turns aroun' to go,
But, the cook says there is goblins,
 An' the cook she oughter know.

So you lie an' watch the goblins
 As they run along the wall;
Some's as big as all creation,
 An' then some is very small,
But they gather close an' closer
 As the blazes rise an' fall.

Then the darkness gathers deeper
 An' the goblins closer creep,
Until you cover up your head
 An' don't e'en dare to peep;
But 'fore you hardly know it,
 You have fallen off to sleep.

MONEY

If I but had the money that is wasted every day,
And thrown away for foolishness and every sort of way,
I could use it in so many, many wiser, better ways,
And could give the poor, downtrodden ones so many happy days.

If I but had the money which is laid up in the banks,
And hoarded, Oh, so carefully by all the moneyed cranks,
I could use it in so many, many thousand little ways
That would make the world go singing and its days all golden
days.

If I but had the money that is spent for useless things,
Plumes for ladies' hats, and bracelets, and for diamond studs and
rings,
I could educate so many, many homeless little boys,
And make the friendless ones to know a thousand little joys.

No, if I had the money that is hoarded up or spent
By those who deal in trifles and are on mere pleasure bent,
I fear that I would spend as they or hoard it in my purse,
And instead of bringing blessing, it would prove to me a curse.

So I'll use to best advantage the little that I've got,
And obey the wise injunction, "Be contented with your lot,"
Ne'er grieving at the proud and rich nor envying them a bit,
For as sure as you love money, you'll be damned by means of it.

TO "LITTLE MOTHER"

I think of you to-day; and thinking,
Memory takes me, soaring on her wings,
Back to bygone days; and linking
Little words and acts of kindness, brings
Your face before me now as first I saw it,
Clear and bright as artist pen could draw it,
Bending o'er my mother's wasted form,
Calmly resting there upon your arm.

I think of you to-day; and thinking,
Ah! how many thousand little things,
Passed long since, when I, a shrinking,
Timid lad, first felt the aches and stings
Of thoughtless words; first knew the joy and gladness
Of words of praise, dispelling all the sadness,
Come to-day to make me think of you,
Standing by your boys, as comrade true.

I think of you to-day; and thinking,
Autumn breezes whisper to me now
Of crimsoned leaves of Fall; and drinking
In the glory of it all, your brow
Appears unto me now, with autumn's glory
Stamped upon it, and your head, now hoary,
Sheds its blessing still upon me here,
As you linger till the frosts appear.

HARVEST HOME

The autumn days are here again, with all their grand display
Of chinquapins and chestnuts, and the leaves so bright and gay.
The flowers are gone from hill and vale, and everywhere instead,
Are swaying in the autumn breeze around and overhead,

The yellow leaves of hickory trees, the crimson of the gum,
The variegated maple leaves where shadows go and come,
All blushing in their various tints where kissed by frosty breeze,
And mingling all in harmony, the sense of sight to please.

The flowers come to cheer our hearts with colors bright and gay,
But even as we look at them we know they'll fade away;
For they are but the heralds glad, who go before and sing
Of all the pomp and grandeur of the noble Harvest King.

What if the flowers are dead and gone; why should we mourn
for them,

When hanging from the boughs we see on every leafy stem
The beauteous fruit of every sort, the hungry world to cheer,
And hanging in the harvest field the ripe corn in the ear?

And then I think of one who reached her three score years and
ten,

And blossomed full of deeds of love, and bore full fruit, and then
Was gathered by the reaper Death, and gently carried o'er,
To mingle at the harvest feast with those who went before.

I see her first in bloom of youth and then a fair young bride,
And then in time of motherhood, and grandma full of pride;
'Tis not unfit that such an one should hear the Master's voice,
And in her death we cannot weep, but only can rejoice.

GOLDENROD FRIENDSHIP

Of all the flowers that scent the air,
And raise their heads to God;
To me the sweetest anywhere
Is simple goldenrod.

In early spring the violets
And lilacs scent the air,
And 'long the walks and parapets
Are flowering everywhere.

But when the autumn comes apace,
And blows her chilling breath
Upon these flowers, so full of grace,
They lay them down in death.

'T is then that 'long the paths and lanes,
Where men and beasts have trod,
And scattered o'er the breezy plains
We see the goldenrod,

In all her beauty shining out,
Defying wintry air;
Her petals waving in and out,
A golden harvest, rare.

And so our friendships strong and true
And registered with God,
Are never chilled by autumn wind,
But like the goldenrod,

Are only fanned to blossom bright
By autumn's chilling breath,
And blossom fuller in the light
Beyond the vale of death.

Barefoot Days; and Other Poems

LIZA MAY AND BEN

We've got no chillun of our own,
We lost the one we had,
And so we got this little un
To try and make us glad.

We got him from the orphans' home,
And almost every day
My Liza sends for me to come
And watch the young un play.

She says he looks like Liza May,
And plays just like her, too,
And clings around her neck the way
That Liza May would do.

She sets and looks at him each day,
And cries and laughs by turns,
As he runs 'round about his play
And she sets by and churns.

He has a cunnin' little way
O' rollin' up his eyes,
And comes a runnin' from his play
And hugs her when she cries.

He's twined his-self around her heart
Just like he was a vine,
And like a donkey to a cart,
He's hitched his-self to mine.

Of course we love our Liza May
Just like we used to do;
But in our hearts, some sort of way,
There's room enough for two;

And when we meet upon that shore,
We four, I think that then
We'll love our Liza May the more
For having loved our Ben.

ON TO RICHMOND!

On to Richmond! On to Richmond!
 Sounds the call now as of yore;
On to Richmond! On to Richmond!
 See, she stands with open door.
Not by hostile bands surrounded,
 Nor by enemies oppressed,
But mid peace and joy unbounded
 She awaits the coming guest.

On to Richmond! There you're welcome,
 Soldiers of the cause that lost,
Welcomed there by sons and daughters
 Of your still unconquered host.
On to Richmond! There are waiting
 Comrades dear of long ago,
All your deeds of might relating
 As they're strolling to and fro,

Arm in arm as in the sixties,
 When you walked the sentry's beat,
Proud, erect, as faithful sentries,
 Disregarding cold and heat.
On to Richmond! There are waiting,
 Silently, your comrades brave,
Who have fallen in the conflict,
 In the hero's honored grave.

On to Richmond! On, ye veterans,
 Hoary headed, battle scarred,
Wearing still your stripes and chevrons,
 Won in sixties when ye warred.
On to Richmond! Hear the yelling!
 Give again the "Rebel shout,"
Cheer your comrades in the marching,
 One by one they're falling out;

Joining Lee, and Hill, and Jackson,
 Where the strife is ever o'er;
Where the bugle call and tocsin
 Silenced are forever more.

TO THE "UNKNOWN" DEAD IN
EAST HILL CEMETERY

You who so peacefully repose beneath this hallowed sod,
While gently waves above you here the fluffy goldenrod,
Can anything that I may do
Bring back the bloom of youth to you,
Or wipe away death's chilling dew,
As on my way I plod?

How gladly would I share with you the joys I have each day,
And give you back the fresh young life our country took away,
With you I suffer, bleed, and die,
And flowing tears bedim my eye
E'en yet, when I see marching by
The men who wore the gray.

You once enjoyed, as I do now, the bloom and strength of youth,
And stood for what you knew was right, freedom of thought and
truth;
But now o'er you the grass has grown,
On your tomb the word "Unknown,"
And this is all the wealth you own,
Who died for our own South.

Perhaps as you lie sleeping here, in some far distant state
A sister and a sweetheart sit and wait, and wait, and wait;
Yet hear no word of cheer from you,
Who wore the gray, and were so true
To sister and to sweetheart, too,
Still watching at the gate.

But now, as loved ones far away still wait for you in vain,
As one by one the years roll on in one continuous chain;
I'll shed a sympathizing tear
With them, for you who slumber here,
Who fought and died and knew no fear,
Though racked with mortal pain.

WHO? WHO?

The reason, you see,
The owl in the tree
Is thought to be wondrous wise,
As he mopes all day
With nothing to say,
Is not all from the look in his eyes.

For, when you're asleep,
Keenest watch he'll keep
On the chickens all housed and fed;
Next day, think of that,
He's grown very fat
On your breakfast while you were in bed.

You may *how* and *why*,
As you whimper and cry,
While the owl says nothing but *who*?
With him it's not *how*,
Nor *why* just now,
But *who* will this tiresome task do?

You'll learn, take my word,
From this wise old bird
Much of wisdom as years go by.
Like him, so will you
Learn to say who, who?
And stop saying *how*, *when*, and *why*.

A TOAST—DEAR OLD VIRGINIA

Here's to Virginia, dear Old Virginia,
Who cultivates all the best within you,
But drops you at once if she's aught "agin" you
That's any way shady at all.

Here's to the country of Jackson and Lee,
The land of the brave and true and free,
The birthplace and homeland of you and me,
Protector of one and all.

Here's to the land of "The Old Dominion,"
The dearest old land to the native Virginian,
No matter at all what the other's opinion,
She stands as the foremost State.

Here's to the land where maidens are fair,
Where hearts are the lightest and know no care,
Where bright smiles are freest and frowns are rare,
On the faces of small and great.

Here's to Virginia, the grand old State,
Whose portals are open early and late
To welcome the stranger within the gate,
From whatever land they come.

Here's to Virginia, the land so fair,
With lakes and forests and peaks in air,
The best old land that's anywhere—
Virginia! The ideal home!

OUT TO OLD BELLE AIR

Spring

In spring when balmy breezes blow,
To melt away the winter's snow,
'T is O, so pleasant then to go
 Out to Old Belle Air;
To walk beside the babbling brook
With fishing rod and line and hook,
Or in the shade with some good book,
 To spend the hours there.

Summer

When summer's heat has parched the ground,
And clouds of dust go floating 'round,
There's not a place that can be found
 To vie with Old Belle Air;
Where ever blows the cooling breeze
Among the hillocks and the trees;
Where sing the birds and hum the bees,
 Among the blossoms rare.

Autumn

When autumn breezes chill the air,
And trees are flecked with colors rare,
There's not a place that can compare
 With dearest Old Belle Air;
Where glows the cheering firelight,
Dispelling gloomy shades of night,
And beam the kindly faces bright
 Of friends and dear ones there.

Winter

When comes at last the winter's snow,
And sharp and strong the chill winds blow,
'T is still so pleasant then to go
 Out to Old Belle Air;

Barefoot Days; and Other Poems

Where burn the cheerful fires still,
To drive away the winter's chill,
And all your soul with comfort fill
And put contentment there.

No matter what the season be,
'Tis always very sweet to me
From daily toil and care to flee
Out to Old Belle Air;
Where always hangs the old latch string
Outside the door, from Spring to Spring,
And all year long the glad hearts sing,
Out to Old Belle Air.



OLD RAG DOLL

I love to play with Mary Jane, who has a curly head,
I love to cut out paper dolls from paper blue and red,
But when the shadows gather and the slumber goblins call,
The closest friend I have then is my old rag doll.

She has no curls upon her head, her face is dirty, too,
And yet she has a curious way of getting close to you,
And when it comes to good looks, she isn't there at all,
But for real downright lovin', give me my old rag doll.

She's got no use for frills and lace and all those sort of things,
She never cracks her head and feet and tears of sorrow brings,
But simply dressed in calico, she calmly watches all,
And nothing ever seems to fret my old rag doll.

I love Old Santa when he brings me china dolls and beds,
And lots of little wax dolls with eyes and curly heads,
But, after all, I'm sure I love Old Santa best of all
Because he brought me Christmas my old rag doll.

"LOVE"

What makes me smile whene'er I meet
A certain maiden on the street,
As hastily she passes on,
And in a moment she is gone,
Escaping through the door?

What makes me sit for hours at night
Before the fading firelight,
And count the sparks, as one by one
They flicker up and then are gone?
What is it, I implore?

Then, when with her I sit and chat,
What makes my heart go pit-a-pat,
My brain go swimming like a leaf,
Or wavelets breaking on a reef
Along the rocky shore?

What is this feeling so divine,
Which makes my heart for her heart pine,
And makes me feel when her I see
That Heaven is very close to me?
'T is love, and nothing more.

AT EVENTIDE

Hast ever stood in quiet mood
 Out in a garden fair,
When sinking low, the sun's bright glow
 Shed radiance everywhere?

Hast seen the rose as red it glows,
 The violets and pinks,
Reflecting aye the sun's bright ray
 As night about them sinks?

Hast stood upon the sandy beach
 And watched the coming tide,
And seen as far as eye could reach
 The wavelets side by side?

Each one reflecting from within
 The light upon it shed,
And making all a glorious sheen
 Of pink and green and red?

Just so our lives, as here we go,
 Reflect the light of love
Shed on us mortals here below
 From heaven's bright dome above;

Until at eventide we may
 A purer light behold;
The bright and all-celestial ray
 Of pure and burnished gold,

Reflecting from the calm, still face
 Of Him, our Lamp and Guide,
Still beaming out His love and grace
 To us at eventide.

YOKED WITH THE MASTER

"Come unto Me," the Master's voice is calling,
"All ye that labor," 'neath sin's yoke so galling,
"And heavy laden are, and sore oppressed,
Come unto Me, and I will give you rest.

"Take my yoke upon your shoulders torn
By Satan's cruel yoke, you long have borne,
And learn of Me the way to wear aright
The yoke, and make the burden seem so light.

"My yoke is easy and I walk beside
You, and your erring steps will always guide,
So that, although the road be rough and steep,
We'll never wander into darkness deep.

"My burden, too, is light, because the yoke
Fits snugly, and the roughnesses are broke
By leaning **hard against your** comrade nigh,
As thus we pull together, you and I."

"CONSIDER THE LILIES"

"Consider the lilies, how they grow,"
They labor not nor spin;
And yet your Father them doth clothe
The freshest garments in;
So that with kings and princes they
In dress may well compare,
Although they never worry them
Nor fret themselves with care.

If God so clothes the lilies fair
That grow out in the field;
If He their every cry doth hear
And them from harm doth shield,
Shall He not clothe your form and mine,
And raiment fit provide
For those who on His bosom lean
Or walk close by His side?

"Consider the lilies, how they grow,"
When earthly cares molest;
God watches o'er you and should know
All that for you is best;
And if you on His goodness lean,
Just as the lilies do,
Like them He'll make you white and clean,
And pure, and care-free, too.

PEACE

“Not as the world giveth
Give I to you peace,”
For while the world liveth
Strife shall never cease.
But they who live by sword and gun
Shall perish thereby one by one,
Yet think when every battle’s won
They at last have peace.

“Not as the world giveth
Give I to you peace,”
But my home in Glory
Holds for you surcease
Of strife. With all in glory there
You shall your robes of whiteness wear,
And there with joyful songs appear
With the Prince of Peace.

“Not as the world giveth
Give I to you peace,”
But who by Me liveth
Lives in joy and ease;
And though by Satan wounded sore,
Shall triumph o’er him more and more,
And win when every battle’s o’er,
Heavenly, perfect peace.

WHERE JESUS WALKED IN GALILEE

Were I in Galilee to-day
Where Jesus used to be,
And Jesus in America,
The land of liberty;
Would I do now as He did then,
And He as I do now?
Would I trust all God's promises
And to His wisdom bow?
Or would I there still wayward be,
Where Jesus walked in Galilee?

Could I dwell in the cottage there
Where Jesus used to dwell,
And sit upon His mother's knee
As she to me would tell,
Just as in olden times she told
To Him, God's wondrous love,
Would those sweet words of hers so true
My life to great things move?
Or would I there a sluggard be,
Where Jesus walked in Galilee?

Is it the place that one is born
That makes a life like His?
Or is it how a man is raised?
No, this is what it is:
'T is God that dwells within the man
And forms His image there,
And living thus within his soul,
Transforms the character;
And this is why, it seems to me,
Christ lived so pure in Galilee.

So, if I'd live as Jesus lived,
From sin entirely free,
I only have to let His God
Come down and dwell in me;

Barefoot Days; and Other Poems

So day by day I'll stronger be
And more like Jesus grow,
Until with love and joy and peace
My heart will overflow,
And so my land like that will be,
Where Jesus walked in Galilee.



A TOAST TO THE VIRGINIAN RAILROAD

Here's to that double Band of Steel
Which 'merging from the wave-washed shore
Of our own State, now seems to feel
Itself with vigor running o'er,
And mounting up, and higher still,
Speeds ever onward through our State,
Now dodging 'round the small foothill,
Now piercing through the mountain great,
Until itself is lost to view
Among the mountain fastnesses,
But ever tells to me and you
Of their great wealth. How vast it is!
Then gliding from their summits high,
Speeds ever onward in its zest,
And forms another stronger tie
To bind together East and West.

THE YOUNG MINISTER'S PRAYER

Guide me, O Lord, as Thou didst guide
The three wise men of old;
That naught of ill my steps betide,
As I lead to the fold
The lambs o'er which Thou placest me,
And give me power and might
That I may lead them safe to Thee
And save them from the night.

Help me, O Lord, to fix mine eye
Upon that radiant star
That shines above Thy holy head
And sheds its radiance far
Out o'er the path my feet may tread,
As home I lead Thy sheep;
And when within the fold they're safe,
Lord, do Thou by them keep.

Teach me, O Lord, Thy way to know
So simply and so well,
That when my feet too feeble grow
To lead, I then may tell
To younger shepherds of the way,
And with them in Thy fold,
Lay precious jewels at Thy feet,
As wise men did of old.

"THY WILL BE DONE"

Were it to come to pass that I should find
My Father's hand, that always was so kind,
Turned dead against me, cruel in His might,
I'd not believe myself, but pray for light.

That I might be empowered to look beyond
The human pale, and see Him far too fond
Of all His creatures here to cause one pain,
Unless it were some noble end to gain.

And so I shut my mind against the thought
That any dispensation by Him wrought
Could be a mere display of power and might,
And close my eyes, and pray for light.

O, give me light, that I may learn to know
That He, from whom all earthly blessings flow,
Brings mighty tempests that the sailors dread,
Yet watches o'er a sparrow when it's dead.

And with that light will come the power to see
A hand of love, in all Thou sendest me,
And power to help me when the battle's won
With self, to say, "Thy will be done."

OUR LITTLE MAN

Calm as in sleep, your little face
Lies wreathed in its cap of lace,
And o'er your features not a trace
 Of any care or sorrow;
No fear of death can there be found,
Nor horror of the chilly ground,
And little flower-covered mound
 Where you will lie to-morrow.

Can there be in your little mind
Some knowledge of the care and grind
That you've escaped or left behind,
 Which makes you seem contented?
Or can it be that you were made,
Like some fair flower, to bloom and fade,
And leave us, in your little glade
 By your sweet fragrance scented?

We built great castles in the air
For you, our little darling fair,
As sleeping in your cradle there
 You rocked away and grew;
And little garments made and pressed
Were laid together in the chest,
By many mother-kisses blest,
 All waiting there for you.

But God is good and God is true,
And we know that His great mind knew
What destiny He'd planned for you
 In His all-glorious plan;
And so, with hearts full to the brim,
And eyes with many teardrops dim,
We simply give you back to Him,
 Our precious Little Man.

SHUT IN

I often think of you, as onward goes
 The tide of years,
And struggling with the surf of human woes,
 To me appears
Your smiling face, set like a beacon guide,
 And then all fears
Are buried as the wreckage by the tide.

I often think of you, as by me throng
 The sorrow free,
The aged joining gaily with the young
 In Christmas glee,
And then your smiling face, ne'er free from pain,
 Points out to me
The road to Bethlehem and makes it plain.

I often think of you, as there shut in
 Your little sphere,
You bear the pain the Master sends and then
 Dispense good cheer;
And with the thought will come the strength to win
 The coming year
Some greater victory o'er the power of sin.

There's ne'er a sorrow, however great,
But humbly borne will bless us, soon or late,
And seldom joy shed by the morning light
But brings a flood of tears before the night.

HE LEADETH ME

He leadeth me! O blessed thought is this;
That as I travel o'er life's rugged road
And stagger oft beneath its heavy load,
He holds my hand and keeps it safe in His.

He leadeth me—in pastures green perhaps;
And as I roam beside the waters still
He comforts me with cheering words, until
He all my heart and soul with love enwraps.

He leadeth me, when doubts and fears assail
Me, on the upward climb of life's dark path,
And cloud and tempest pour their meed of wrath
Upon me, and in agony I quail.

He leadeth me, when through death's vale I go;
And as I feel the chilling waters creep
Upon me, then I ask Him please to keep
My hand in His, and lead me ever so.

He leadeth me, till Heaven's bright gate I see;
And as we pass the angel sentry by,
He'll never stop to ask me how and why
I go within; because, He leadeth me.

PASSING

We are strong and full of vim,
Fleet of foot and lithe of limb,
 But alas!

The years, like fleeting sparks,
Leave upon us little marks
 As they pass.

Days of joy and love and hope
Hand us out our little dope,
 Which we quaff.
Then we run and jump and spring
Till a care's a trifling thing
 At which we laugh.

So the vim and strength of youth
Bear us on until, forsooth,
 Ere we think,
We have reached the border land,
Where we stand with trembling hand
 On the brink.

Just a little breath of wind,
That in youth we wouldn't mind,
 Strikes us then,
And a little mound of grass
Marks the spot to those who pass
 Where we've been.

Yet, this world is not our home,
And we only go and come
 As the snow;
We are simply pilgrims passing,
And there's joy all else surpassing
 Where we go.

A BABE—A METEOR

Whence came your form and feature,
You little dimpled creature?

And whence the radiant smile
Our laughter to beguile?

The form is by some angel given,
The feature by thy God was graven,
The smile is but a ray from heaven
To bless us for a while.

But why our hopes thus blighted,
As if by Heaven slighted?

And why so soon away,
You little heavenly ray?

Like meteor from the heavens you came
To light us by your little flame,
And passing, left us but a name
And memories of your stay.

But would we, had we power,
Detain you for an hour?

Or would we check your flight
Out through the realms of night?

There, twinkling as a little star,
Up in the heavenly depths you are,
Your radiance beaming from afar
To guide our steps aright.

JUST A WORD

'T is in my heart to say some word to ease
The burden that I know so heavy rests
Upon you now, as to your lips is pressed
The cup of sorrow, and to bring surcease
Of pain and anguish as you struggle on
Until your failing strength is almost gone.

'T is in my heart to whisper in your ear
Some little word of sympathy and love,
Which, falling like a blessing from above,
May fill your heart with joy and hope and cheer,
And send you on along life's changing road,
Singing a song as on you rests the load.

'T is in my heart to sing some little song
Of by-gone days, some song with mem'ries rife
Of youth and courting days, of martial strife,
Of married bliss and home, and thus to throng
Your mind with all of these enchanting thoughts
And banish all your pain and care and doubts.

'T is in my heart to whisper just one word,
So full of love and joy and peace and rest,
So full of hope, so full of power and zest,
That sorrow flees whene'er that name is heard,
And carries with it all our load, and frees us—
The hallowed, ever blessed name of Jesus.

DEVELOPMENT

Hiding in the seeping cave,
Stranger to hair-cut or shave,
Fearing storm or ocean wave;
Ape-like beings here have trod,
All of man and none of God.

Dwelling in the open field,
Tilling land that it may yield
Food to eat and cloth to shield;
Thrifty beings homeward plod,
Less of man and more of God.

Dwellings built of stone or wood,
Bidding ships convey his food,
Striving for his brother's good,
Neatly clothed and neatly shod;
Still less man and still more God.

Dwelling in the palace still,
Bidding engines do his will,
Helping on his brother, till
Burying self beneath the sod;
None of man and all of God.

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